Wagner College graduates 721 students during 133rd commencement ceremony

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Wagner College graduates 721

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“You are a new generation capable of healing our social divisions, building a fair and just social order and its imperative that you rise to this historical moment," he said to graduations and their families.

He mentioned his 4-month-old grand-daughter, Zephyr, who is multi-ethnic, multi-racial, and he said she often thinks about how she will experience the world.

“What gives me hope that her life will be one marked by meaning and honor is what I’ve learned here at Wagner — that your generation is a generation of transformational leadership to honor the pledge in creating a world of liberty and justice for all," Guarasci said.

This year’s commencement was the 100th graduation ceremony held on Wagner College’s Grymes Hill campus. The school was founded in Rochester, New York, and moved to its current address in 1918. A total of 721 degrees were awarded, including bachelor’s, master’s, post-master’s certificates and first doctorate degrees.

Graduates and their families set outdoors for the ceremony, under a tent on Sutter Oval and were lucky with the beautiful, sunny weather.

Honorary degree recipients and keynote speakers were L. Lee Knefelkamp, professor emeriti of psychology and education at Teacher College-Columbia University and Freeman A. Hrabowski III, president of the University of Maryland, Baltimore County.

Knefelkamp, whose grandson will enroll as a first year student in fall at Wagner, praised the school’s reputation for a strong practical liberal arts education.

He told graduates to create a life of responsibility, wonder and radical astonishment — and a life that is both useful and rewarding.

Hrabowski told students to never stop learning, “to know your story and never let anyone define who you are”.

In his speech, Hrabowski said he talked to graduating students before the ceremony to get a sense of what Wagner College means to them. He called them by name to stand, and asked the audience to applaud. The students credited dedicated faculty and staff, he said.

Hrabowski, who has worked to advance education for minorities throughout his career, cited the musical “Hamilton” and spoke of how his mother’s love of reading began while she was working for a wealthy family.

His mother became a teacher, and she told him, “Teachers touch eternity through their students,” he recalled.

He encouraged students to never stop learning, and “to know your duty and never let anyone define who you are”.

Hrabowski was asked with this advice for graduates: “Watch your thoughts, they are the seeds of your character. Watch your words, they become your actions. Watch your actions, they become your character. Watch your character, it becomes your destiny.”

Student speaker Eman Merwanly, a dual childhood education and English major whose parents are Egyptian immigrants, credits Wagner for getting her out of her comfort zone to try new things, and not to be afraid of making mistakes. Through her 4 years, she learned that “experience is indispensable to learning.”

“Dream. Believe. Dare. And Do,” she said in both Arabic and English.

The second student speaker, Glen MacDonald was a tour guide for incoming students.

“Wagner has become to me a profound experience, a second family and a personal home,” he said.

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Kelly Walsh of Prince's Bay gives the thumbs up ahead of the ceremony.

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WAGNER

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An honorary degree recipient and keynote speaker Dr. Lee Knafl, professor emeritus of psychology and education at Teachers College of Columbia University, right, with Wagner College President Dr. Richard Guarasci, right. Dr. Promen A. Hrabowski III, president of the University of Maryland, Baltimore, addresses the audience.

Excited graduates cross the stage to receive their degrees.

Student speakers, from left, white, and Glen MacDonald address the crowd.

The Wagner College commencement ensemble sings “America the Beautiful.”

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One graduation cap advises “Have courage and be kind.”

MRS. Kocurek, Assistant Dean of Students, addresses the audience.

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